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BLM Fills Two Key Washington, D.C., Positions

The Bureau of Land Management recently filled two top positions in its Washington, DC, office, announced Kathleen Clarke, the agency's national director.

Lawrence Benna, a native of New York City, is the new deputy director for operations. He succeeds Francis Cherry, who retired from BLM in February.

Selma Sierra is the new chief of staff. She has served as the acting chief of staff since May 2004. Sierra is from La Union, New Mexico.

Benna assumes a key post at BLM, which manages more land than any other agency in the United States, and operates with a \$2 billion budget. He most recently served as BLM's assistant director for business and fiscal resources and chief financial officer.

"Larry's extensive experience with the business, administrative and financial aspects of BLM gives him essential insight into the bureau's daily operations," said Clarke. "His leadership, problem-solving skills and strategic vision already helped BLM resolve significant issues and meet important goals, and will serve him well as deputy director."

Benna holds a bachelor's degree in geology from the University of New Mexico and served with BLM in Craig, Colorado, and Denver, Colorado, before moving to Washington, D.C., in 1984.

Sierra has extensive experience in city, state and federal government. She earned a degree in government and journalism from New Mexico State University.

"Selma brings a wealth of experience in government and public affairs to BLM," Clarke said. "Her knowledge of the West, and in particular, the issues facing our agency are invaluable in guiding the work of managing the public lands."

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Sierra was the press secretary for U.S. Representative Joe Skeen from 1995-2001. She also served as deputy press secretary for the House Ways and Means Committee.

BLM managed 261 million surface acres, most of it located in 12 western states. The agency also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the country. BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of public land for the use and enjoyment by all the nation's citizens.

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